

[66 cont.]

782
[533] Sitting before the obo, the lama gives the appropriate prayers, accompanying them on his hourglass drum and the bell. At the same time the people burn incense at several places, kowtow, and blow the conch. This service may sometimes last the entire day. When the lama is finished with the prayer, he takes the tormo to a stone on the obo, sprinkles the obo with holy water, and casts barley on it, over which he lightly blows with his mouth. The people then take something from offerings that stand in front of the obo, pluck something off, and throw some of this into the incense fire and on the obo. The flowers are all thrown on the mound. Meanwhile others have already placed the spears, twigs, and mani-flags on the obo and have thrown the votive gifts on it, as at the month offering. Then all of them circle around the obo, throwing the white stones and praying the obo call. At this point all of them once more make a threefold kowtow, drink tea, and go home.

The prayer service may also last several days. Then people set up tents on the mountain and live and eat there.

527
782 The obo festival: Every year on the sixth day in the sixth month an obo festival takes place. At these festivals the obo is venerated in the morning, as it is at the month offering. A sheep offering and the prayer service of the lama may also be connected with it.

527 All the people from the neighborhood, men and women, old and young, gather at the obo. If the obo terrain is too difficult and not level enough, they gather at the foot of the mountain or on a meadow. There the men hold horse races, 541
533 people sit around the fire and drink and sing; they eat and 439
526 dance and laugh. Chinese traders appear, set up their booths, and peddle their wares. -- Formerly, when the old weapons were still used, the horse races were followed by archery, spear throwing, and sword fights. Wrestling matches were especially 178
541 popular. Nowadays this is no longer the case. Only the horse racing and the singing contests are still held. The mountain- 533
171 spirit rejoices when the people are so gay (3).

3. [Foreign text p. 69.] The obo festival is also celebrated by the

[68 cont.]

192
*778

[Note on foreign text p. 71 cont.]

la rtse - obo, yar = upward, stod la = upward, to place on top. -- rēdzioñ:

Tibetan zon = to ride. -- yifula:

Tibetan ri bo = mountain, hill, lha = spirit. -- ndziḡdien: Tibetan 'jig =

transitoriness, rtēn = container. A

Buddhistic mode of expression for the

world: the ten containers of transitoriness

(Unkrig).

Little stonepiles: lawdzē dzidziḡa = obo chicks.

Obo sheep-offering: lawdzē tada xoni šēñlie = to sacrifice a sheep before the obo.

[782] The lama prays before the obo: lama lawdzē tada moḡguni.
The offerings: yilenē šēñlie = total offerings.

To dwell at the obo: lawdze tada sō-.

To set up a tent: bekārge poḡguo-.

[541] Horse racing: mori holilḡa = to make horses race.

Whose horse is fast: kāni mori gurdā?

• [526] Shooting competition: sēmu sēmuda- = to shoot arrows.

Whose skill with weapons is great: kāni xuawu ḡgewa?

The young people wrestle: mula kunḡgē walde-.

Whose strength is great: kāni kudzi ḡgewa?

Large and small sing together: ḡge mulasḡē nigē dōlā-.

Whose songs are many: kāni dō uluona?

[541] Obo horse-racing: lawdzē sda rēdzioñ (Tib. (8) [see Note 8 above].

[527] Obo festival: lawdzē šdodlō, mori holḡani = to make the horses run pelting the obo.

[621] The obo protects human beings: lawdzē ayili kun, ase, mulā-sēla, nasā, ḡuosāni furoñlāni = the obo of the village (kin group) protects human beings, animals, little children, from epidemics and strife.

[776] The mountain-spirit: yifu la (Tib.) (8) [see Note 8 above].

twenty Tibetan soldiers, were flogged on such occasions⁷⁹² in order to make a drastic example of them. Whenever¹⁵⁷ people had a serious conflict, this Living Buddha was invited as arbitrator. He extended his zeal with prodigality, indulging his greedy fondness for display, and cultivating his reputation for knowing how to straighten out problems that seemed to be in a hopeless muddle. These activities absorbed all of his time and energy.

Cha-ik Hutukhtu followed in the wake of the Living Buddha of Siamar, building up his influence among the Chinese officials by means of gifts and visits, and by obtaining of the illustrious title Hutukhtu. He was never at home.

The Living Buddha Pu of Seerkok was fond of beautiful and fast horses. Every three days he participated^[526] in the morning races in the city of Hsining, riding his own horses in competition with the Moslems, who raised the best horses in the country. He was a better success at riding horses and breeding them than in philosophy and metaphysics; he was never seen in the temple.

The supreme chief of Seerkok, incarnation of the celebrated and learned Min-chu-erh, had a job at Nanking in the Bureau of Tibetan and Mongol affairs, but spent all of his spare time in Shanghai, indulging in expensive distractions and sorely depleting the funds of his intendancy. Back in Hsining, the community of the lamas stirred up trouble by not allowing him to return to the monastery, and preparing to bring suit against him at court, claiming that he was not the genuine incarnation. The T'u-kuan Hutukhtu told me in Man hui, Hou-t'ao, in 1940 that he had sent his intendant to Seerkok in order to avoid scandal and to smooth the ruffled feathers of the lamas, and that after several weeks, Min-chu-erh, his behavior having been on display in the city of Hsining, had succeeded in returning to Seerkok, protected by a retinue of thirty Moslem soldiers loaned by General Ma Erh-hsiang.

It was delightful to encounter once in a while a good Living Buddha, who was really loved by the people. In Hsien mi monastery the Goomang Buddha, an old man, was engaged all year long in making up packages containing medicine, on which he blew his blessings and which he distributed gratis to people who come from far away to receive them. It was a panacea, which^[757] healed all kind of diseases of men, women, and children.

Dealing with fasting rites for laymen, there will be recorded the example of a really outstanding Living Buddha, the old Li. Modest and unassuming, adored by the people, his preaching developed and revived the sense of religiosity and of justice and humanity. His beneficent influence radiated far beyond the circle of fasters, into families and the administration of villages. He was at that time, among the Living Buddhas, the only educator of the Monguors, a benefactor of the Monguor society.

[p. 70(B)]